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ABSTRACT

A study answered the question: are there significant differences in scores for two forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Third Edition? Subjects, 23 fifth graders, were given Forms K and L, Level 5/6, of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The tests were administered by the regular classroom teacher in two testing sessions. Students were randomly assigned to two groups: group A was given Form K and group B was given Form L. Results indicated no significant differences for Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Total scores. The results of this study were limited by two factors: only one level of the reading test was investigated, and the study included only a small sample of fifth-grade students. Within these limitations, there is no basis to conclude that Form K of Level 5/6 is easier or more difficult than Form L for fifth graders. (One table of data is included.) (MG)

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Equivalence of Forms K and L of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests with Fifth-Grade Students

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Equivalence of Forms K and L of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests With Fifth-Grade Students

Educational policy makers demand accountability in today's schools (Fox, 1990). Teachers must measure and record student growth. Principals must measure and record classroom and grade level progress. The public must be informed about the progress students make or fail to make in reading. There is a demand for quantitative measurement. Standardized test scores can assess student growth. Fiske (1988) notes that the amount and influence of such tests in the United States is greater now than at any time in history. Often, survey tests are used to measure reading achievement over the course of a school year. Tests that offer equivalent forms can satisfy the need for pre- and post-test scores. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Third Edition, (1989) are survey tests that contain alternate forms, Form K and Form L. These forms are assumed to be equal.

Johns (1985) raised the question of equivalence of forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Second Edition. (1978). About 300 students from grades three, four, and five were given alternate forms about one week apart. Random administration controlled for possible practice effects. No significant raw score differences were found for the third graders. However, for the fourth and fifth graders, significant differences were found in raw scores.

Form 3 of Level D was found to be more difficult than Form 1. Johns concluded that students who took Form 1 as a pretest and Form 3 as a posttest could probably enhance their reading comprehension score.

Because schools and researchers (Briechle, 1984; Mooney, 1986) use alternate forms of the Gates-MacGinitie, it was the purpose of this study to determine if similar results would be found with fifth-grade students using the most recent edition of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests.

Sample and Procedure

Are there significant differences in scores for two forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, Third Edition? Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Total test scores on Form K were statistically compared to scores on Form L. A sample of 23 fifth graders was given Forms K and L, Level 5/6, of the Gates-MacGinitie. The students represented an in-tact classroom from an upper-middle class school in a midwestern community. Previous achievement test results indicated that students in this school typically score above the national average.

The tests were administered by the regular classroom teacher in two testing sessions during the first part of October. Students were randomly assigned to two groups. Group A was given From K and Group B was given Form L during the first testing session which occurred during the last class period of the day. The second testing session was administered three days later, also during the final class

period of the day. In this instance, Group B was given Form K and Group A, Form L.

All tests were scored by the Riverside Publishing Company, Scoring Service. Statistical analyses were then conducted.

Results and Discussion

The table contains raw scores and the results of the *t*-tests conducted for Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Total. As shown in the table, there are no significant differences for Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Total scores for the fifth-grade subjects in this study.

Table

Results of *t*-Tests on Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Total Raw Scores Achieved by 23 Students in Grade Five on Two Forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests

Score	Form	Mean	S.D.	*t*-Value	Significance
Vocabulary	K	27.78	7.09	.42	.34
	L	28.09	8.18		
Comprehension	K	30.78	8.96	.53	.30
	L	30.17	9.93		
Total	K	58.57	15.15	.26	.40
	L	58.26	17.00		

The results of this study are limited by two factors. First, only one level of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests was investigated. Second, the study included only a small sample of fifth-grade students. Within these limitations, there is no basis to conclude that From K of Level 5/6 is

easier or more difficult than Form L for fifth graders.

With the widespread use of achievement tests to evaluate student progress, similar studies might be conducted with students from grade one through grade twelve. Such systematic investigations may help assure users that so-called equivalent forms of the test live up to their name.

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